Amendments to the Specification:

On page 1, after the title and before the first sentence beginning "The invention relates to", please insert the following:

This application is a 371 of PCT/EP03/02031 filed on February 27, 2003, published on September 12, 2003 under publication number WO 03/074753 and which claims priority benefits from German patent application number DE 102 09 423.3 filed March 5, 2002.

On page 4, please rewrite the paragraph beginning at line 23 as follows:

- a voltage supply apparatus having a cathode potential switching device for application of the cathode potential by way of a vacuum port to the cathode wire and for the application of a high-voltage ignition pulse by way of a vacuum high-voltage port to the ignition electrode and for the connection of the anode potential to the high-vacuum vessel to be coated and to the anode member.

On page 6, please rewrite the paragraph beginning at line 3 as follows:

In principle, the insulator member of the metal plasma spray rod has, in its centre, an ignition supply line, which extends to the end face of the insulator rod, where it terminates in an ignition electrode. That ignition electrode can be in disc form or in the form of a ring plate, an ignition pulse for ignition of the getter metal plasma first being applied, by way of the supply line, to the ignition electrode and an ignition plasma occurring at the end face, between the ignition electrode and the cathode wire, which plasma is propagated towards the anode and persists if, in the meantime, the wound-on cathode ~~beam~~ wire has been connected to a cathode potential and the anode member together with the high-vacuum vessel wall has been connected to a ground potential.

On page 8, please rewrite the paragraph beginning at line 1 as follows:

In a further preferred embodiment of the invention, the ignition electrode is arranged at that end face of the insulator member which projects into the high-~~voltage~~ vacuum vessel. That position of the ignition electrode ensures that the metal plasma starts in the region of the end face of the insulator member and has the advantage that the ignition electrode can be started by relatively simple means. For that purpose, the insulator member comprises a cylindrical ceramic tube having, in its axial region, a supply wire leading to a central metal plate as the ignition electrode on the end face of the insulator member, resulting in relatively simple assembly and fixing of the ignition electrode in the centre of the end face of a getter metal plasma spray rod.

On page 15, please rewrite the paragraph beginning at line 21 as follows:

Figure 3 shows diagrammatic view of an arrangement for the production of a getter metal coating 1 of a third embodiment of the invention, Figure 3a showing a sectional view in the plane of section along line ~~C-E~~ C-C of Figure 3b and Figure 3b showing, in basic diagrammatic form, a partially broken away high-vacuum vessel 5 having a metal plasma spray head 21. Components having the same functions as in the preceding Figures are referred to by the same reference numerals and are not separately discussed.